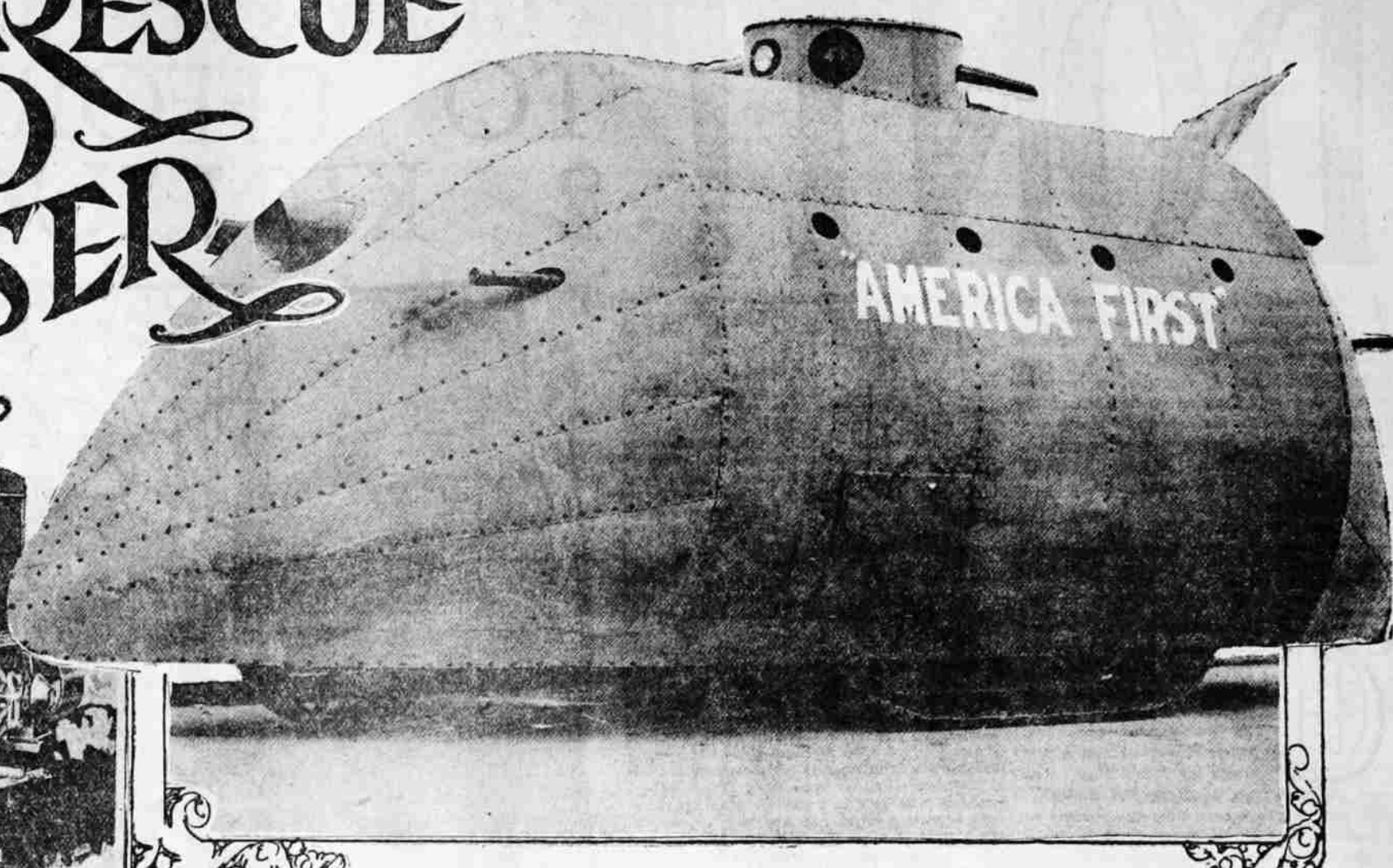


# Magazine Feature Section

## TO THE RESCUE in a LAND CRUISER



BENJAMIN HOLT and VIEW of  
CATERPILLAR INSIDE of BRITISH TANK



This photograph is that of a "tank" built for a recent parade in Peoria, Ill., by the manufacturers of the tractors used by the British army. It is supposed to be an exact duplication of the war machine. Benjamin Holt is the tractor's inventor.

**T**HE scientific theory which denies the existence of the absolute straight line, claiming that all things are only part of great circles and merely appear straight, seems also to apply to time. For the eternal circle in which the world moves has again revolved and the old is now the new.

Centuries ago, when the Greeks besieged the ancient city of Troy, they resorted to the far-famed ruse of the wooden horse as a means of gaining entrance to the stubborn city. The Homeric legend is well known; the horse was admitted to the city, and, once within, poured out a host of warriors, who broke down the defenses and let in the army.

It is not a horse, but the horse's modern substitute which is now being used. As a gasoline engine has replaced the horse for purposes of drayage, so the modern "wooden horse" is a gasoline one.

It is, while the latest invention of destruction which the war has called forth is deadly and terrifying, it comes to the soldiers as merely part of the routine. When men have become thoroughly accustomed to being in imminent danger of death for months at a time, they are not going to be particularly alarmed if the potential destruction takes some new form. They will seek to find a counter destructive force and apply it on the enemy's new weapon.

But the latest engine of death to appear is appalling by its uncanny invincibility. Showing, as Lloyd George said, that the enemy has no monopoly on inventive genius, the British have put in the field the new tank tractors, so-called, and, as is the case with most of the new

effectiveness in the recent Somme drive.

From quiet Peoria, Ill., about 1000 tractors were sent to the British Government—for what purpose the manufacturer did not ask nor care to know. Completed only according to the original specifications, the tractors bore no arms or armor whatever. These things the British added for themselves.

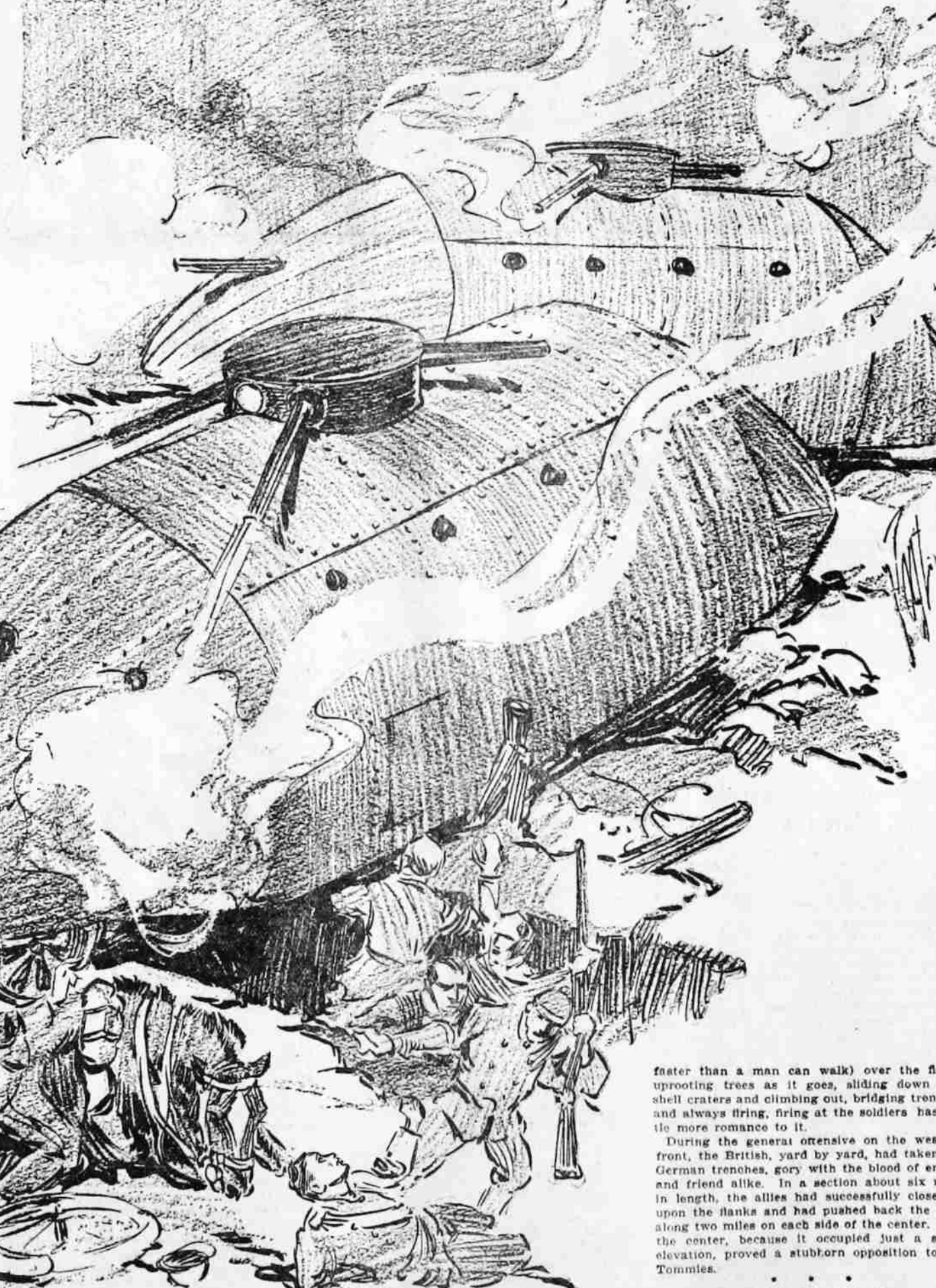
The tractors, of the "caterpillar" type, have been converted into armored land cruisers. They hurdle trenches, crawl over shell craters and walk through forest unharmed by intense gun fire. With them the British have charged the trenches of the Germans and obtained signal advantages of positions, otherwise unattainable.

These land cruisers' chief feature lies in their caterpillar tread. The tractors run on five small-sized railroad wheels. But these wheels never touch the ground. Instead, they run on infinitely jointed rails which are enclosed in a wide, corrugated band. The band goes around the wheels, and, on account of its width and lateral strength, forms a road upon which the tractor travels. The bands do not stick in mud

and are not liable to find any obstacle to which they cannot adjust themselves and carry the tractor over.

A weight of 15,000 pounds and with a strength of 120 horse-power, the tractors can be stopped only by a direct hit from shells of considerable caliber. And shells of sufficient caliber to menace the machines cannot be employed where the conditions are such as to warrant the use of the tractors. Big gun fire directed upon the tractors would imperil the lives of the soldiers whom it was attacking. Machine gun fire is, of course, useless against the ponderous caterpillars which crawl with an uncanny, irresistible determination into the trenches and rout the occupants.

When the war first broke out and the shrapnel and machine gun fire demonstrated the absolute uselessness of cavalry, trench fighting or spectacular air fighting became the only real means of combat. Trench fighting afforded little personal contact; it meant, rather, days and



faster than a man can walk) over the fields, uprooting trees as it goes, sliding down into shell craters and climbing out, bridging trenches and always firing, firing at the soldiers has little more romance to it.

During the general offensive on the western front, the British, yard by yard, had taken the German trenches, gory with the blood of enemy and friend alike. In a section about six miles in length, the allies had successfully closed in upon the flanks and had pushed back the lines along two miles on each side of the center. But the center, because it occupied just a slight elevation, proved a stubborn opposition to the Tommies.

### Cars Accompany Infantry.

**A** CHILL morning mist, preceding a day of bright sunshine, concealed the actual attack. With the infantry went the new armored cars, led by Houseman in what he termed his flagship. Rolling across the fields in their uncanny, almost ludicrous caterpillar gait, the cars wormed through shell crater, bowed over stumps, and made straight for the foe's stronghold on the hill. The barbed wire was no more obstacle than string. Up and up the tractors mounted and plowed into the trenches on the hill where they left a wake of dead Germans or

put them to absolute and terrified fright.

One thousand yards apart, the machines moved on until they gradually reached the limit of their desires and the needs of the army for safety. But, just as the tractors were about to turn and come back, the one next adjoining that of Capt. Houseman shivered and stopped in its tracks like a stricken animal.

Although it was practically impossible to use against the tractors guns of sufficient caliber to stop them or work any havoc at all on them, an indirect and lucky shot, fired probably against orders, had pierced the hide of one of Houseman's craft. What it had done to the machine, whether it had killed the crew, and if more were to follow, Houseman did not know. But within, three men lay dead and two seriously wounded. A gun had been shattered and the transmission and steering gear of the motor had been demolished.

### Approach Appalling Sure.

**W**ITHOUT a moment's indecision, Houseman turned his machine broadside before the opposing guns and started over the intervening 1000 yards for the crippled member of his charge. At what seemed to him a snail's pace, he crossed the fire-ridden field—slowly, but with the appalling surety of the tractor "tank." The approaching fire of the batteries mounted on Houseman's car drove back the Germans who were about to swarm on to the stricken tractor. And as Houseman blazed his way up to the silent machine, the Germans retired to safety from the gun fire of his crew.

Amidst the din of battle he could get into no communication with the unharmed men of the other tractor. How badly they had been hit and what their condition was he could not ascertain, but a plan for rescuing them and the machine very quickly occurred to Houseman. He started his machine around the comrade "tank" in as narrow a circle as it could negotiate. With the guns blazing forth at the Germans, and with their machine guns and rifles answering haughtily but fruitlessly, Houseman's command crossed in front of the other car and stepped for a bare moment, forming a sort of T.

In that second, Houseman had raised the armored trap and slipped out of his car and around to the rear of the other. He carried a sturdy grappling chain, which, with utter disregard for the bullets cutting the air about him, he meant to fasten to the wounded tractor. Meanwhile his own machine trundled around until it reached the spot where Houseman was working. He had fastened the chain on the hind end of the "dead" tractor and was just ready when the machine returned to him.

Back to the British lines Capt. Houseman tugged, trailing the saved machine in his wake. The Germans followed for a little distance, became quite discouraged and left the tractor, which they had crippled but not captured, to its owners.

Cheered by the men and thanked profusely by his superior officers, Houseman only smiled and disclaimed any heroism for his act, saying that the two tractors afforded him such a barrier that he had been in no danger. But bullets splattered against the door through which he had but a second before returned to his machine, denied the safety of his position.

fermable machines, have enjoyed a large measure of success from its use. From the peaceful, bucolic occupation of harvesting and farm work to the grim business of war is a far step. But the tractor, originally designed to meet some of the difficult problems of modern farming, have been turned into veritable land battleships by the ingenious English War Department heads, and have shown high

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